

HEG Technology Still Employs Workers Under 18

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New York – A new investigative report by China Labor Watch (CLW) has revealed that a China-based consumer electronics supplier to Samsung, Oppo, Huawei, and TCL, continues to employ underage workers (under 18) despite being outed on multiple occasions by CLW since 2012 for exploiting children (under 16), underage labor, and student workers.

Since 2012, CLW has investigated working conditions at HEG Technology in Huizhou, China four times. Each probe has uncovered child, underage, or student labor. In September 2014, HEG sued CLW in China for defamation linked to CLW's exposing the employment of child labor on HEG's production lines. CLW [responded](#) in December 2014 with additional evidence suggesting that HEG and Samsung were covering up the use of child workers.

CLW initiated a probe of HEG's production facilities in June 2015. The partner investigator was discovered by HEG management, which influenced some of the information collected for the report. Nonetheless, the investigation revealed a number of findings, and while a comparison of working conditions at HEG from 2012 to 2015 demonstrates some limited improvements, serious labor rights violations continue. (Click [here](#) for the full report.)

HEG appeared to institute stricter hiring requirements, especially at its main plant, including a minimum hiring age of 20 and avoidance of student workers. But gender-based discrimination continues, with a preference for women. Moreover, at HEG's branch plant, near the main plant, underage people (16-17 years of age) continue to work on production lines without special protections, as required by Chinese law.

Pre-job training at HEG also increased to four days. However, occupational safety training was only a proportion of that time and, critically, the safety training itself was generalized and incomplete, failing to provide much information on risks or toxic chemicals related to each workers' specific production processes.

In a number of other areas, working conditions have failed to improve. Overtime hours—two to three hours per day, six days a week—still exceed legal maximums, and overtime continues to be mandatory. Wages remain at or slightly above the local minimum wage, about \$1.25 per hour, which makes workers dependent on overtime to make ends meet. Resignation still effectively requires workers to “apply” for authorization from supervisors, even though Chinese law only requires notification. Whereas in the past HEG workers could live in a crowded dorm, with 10 people to a room, for free, now they must pay 50 RMB (\$7.85) per month. Insurance policy has apparently worsened; according to HEG workers contacted in November 2015, HEG has made insurance voluntary, which contradicts the mandatory insurance rule under Chinese law. Just as in 2012, CLW's 2015 investigation found no evidence of a functioning labor union at HEG.

After three years of periodic investigation, it should be clear to the buyers of HEG Technology—Samsung, Huawei, Oppo, and TCL—that labor abuses have failed to fundamentally improve. These brand companies must immediately initiate changes at HEG by making necessary adjustments to production prices, time schedules, and oversight.

About China Labor Watch

Founded in 2000, China Labor Watch is an independent not-for-profit organization. For more than a decade, CLW has collaborated with labor organizations and the media to conduct in-depth assessments of factories in China that produce toys, bikes, shoes, furniture, clothing, and electronics for some of the world's largest brand companies. CLW's New York office creates reports from these investigations, educates the international community on supply chain labor issues, and pressures corporations to improve conditions for workers.

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